

SUPPORTING THE PRIMARY CARE SECTOR'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

By Agency for Integrated Care

Following Singapore's first confirmed COVID-19 case in late January 2020, the primary care sector has been significantly involved in helping to enhance disease surveillance and reduce risk of community transmission. To this end, various temporary measures and schemes have been implemented to support our GP partners in the fight against COVID-19. For one, to focus primary care efforts in better detection and management of COVID-19 infections, the Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPCs) were activated on 18 Feb 2020. A total of 933 activated PHPCs (as of 1 May) have helped more than 400,000 patients diagnosed with acute respiratory infection (ARI) to benefit from the Flu Subsidy Scheme (FSS). Besides the activation of PHPCs, the primary care sector and supporting agencies have come together in the implementation of various measures to combat the spread of COVID-19.

OVERVIEW OF PRIMARY CARE'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

PHPC Flu Subsidy Scheme (FSS)



- Under the FSS, PHPCs have been activated to provide treatment via an in-person consult at subsidised rates to Singaporeans, PRs, or eligible Work Permit Holders diagnosed with acute respiratory illnesses (ARI).
- To facilitate the proper tracking and analysis of cases, PHPCs have also been submitting relevant data related to their ARI cases. This has been crucial in ensuring the national caseload is managed more robustly, and strategies to combat COVID-19 can be developed more effectively.
- To ensure adequate protection of doctors and clinic staff of PHPCs, activated PHPCs have also been provided with personal protective equipment (PPE).
- A list of activated PHPCs can be found at www.flugowhere.gov.sg.

Time-limited extension of Medisave and CHAS subsidy for video-consultations (VCs)



- To support the larger national move towards safe distancing, CHAS Chronic subsidy and MediSave have been extended to VCs of selected chronic conditions from 3 April 2020 till further notice.
- Each VC is subject to the same CHAS Chronic subsidy and MediSave withdrawal limits as compared to a physical consult, and GPs should have had at least one in-person consultation with the patient within the past year before opting for VC for treatment during this period.
- A list of institutions with practitioners who have completed the necessary e-learning and are able to submit CHAS Chronic and MediSave claims for VC can be found at www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/vc.

Swab and Send Home (SASH)



- To cope with the increasing number of patients requiring swabbing, more than 200 GP clinics (as of 1 May 2020) have signed up for the SASH initiative.
- Under SASH, clinics who meet the requirements work with their labs and perform COVID-19 swabs for their patients who meet the swabbing criteria.
- The costs of the swab are covered under FSS and participating SASH clinics are able to make claims in MOH Healthcare Claims Portal (MHCP).

Patient Risk Profile Portal (PRPP)



- IHiS, with the support of MOH, has launched a Patient Risk Profile Portal (PRPP) to help clinics triage and promptly identify patients with COVID-19 symptoms.
- After a patient completes an online declaration form pre-visit or at the clinic, clinic staff can view the patient's risk indicator aggregated based on the patient's responses and information from Government databases. GPs are able to view more details, including the patient's contact and travel history, as well as the number of GP clinic visits in the past 14 days.
- PRPP allows clinic staff and GPs to take necessary actions such as isolating the patient and donning appropriate PPE before seeing the patient. The use of PRPP not only protects a clinic's patients, staff and doctors, it also helps other GP clinics in managing COVID-19 infections.

Thank you to all our GP partners for your ongoing support and cooperation as our first line of care in the community in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you would like to find out more about support for the primary care sector against COVID-19, please contact the GP Engagement Team at gp@aic.sg or 6632 1199, or visit Primary Care Pages (www.primarycarepages.sg).